

CORRESPONDENCE FROM RAY FREMMER

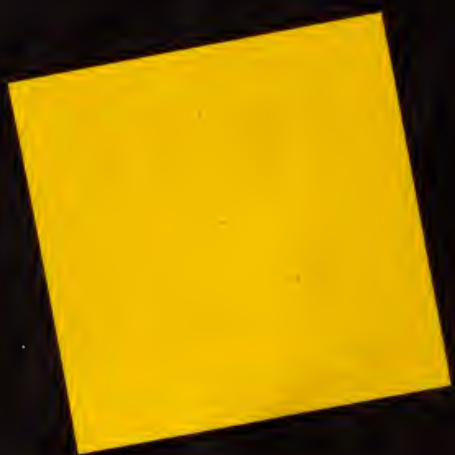
November 28, 1977 to December 31, 1982

CONTENTS - by Subject and Date

Subject	Pages
Pine Lodge - Methuen, Mass.	1 - 4
Stillwater - Salem, N.H.	5 - 6
Stanton Harcourt - Windham, N.H.	7
Flaming Towers Carving	8 - 9
Barrington House - Great Barrington, Mass.	10
Irving & Casson Company - Interior Decorators	11
Tenney Castle - Methuen, Mass.	12 - 13
Serlo Organ Hall and Factory - Methuen, Mass.	14 - 16
Goodspeeds Bookstore - Boston, Mass.	17
Arthur McKenzie	18
Walter Glidden	19 - 20
Judge Cox	21
Charles W. Mann	22
Arthur T. Walker	23
Angelo 'Angy' Ellison	24 - 25
Ray Fremmer	26 - 35
APPENDIX	36 - 37

Edited and Compiled by the recipient

Robert DeLage



CORRESPONDENCE FROM RAY FREMMER

November 28, 1977 to December 31, 1982

CONTENTS - by Subject and Date

Subject	Pages
Pine Lodge - Methuen, Mass.	1 - 4
Stillwater - Salem, N.H.	5 - 6
Stanton Harcourt - Windham, N.H.	7
Flaming Towers Carving	8 - 9
Barrington House - Great Barrington, Mass.	10
Irving & Casson Company - Interior Decorators	11
Tenney Castle - Methuen, Mass.	12 - 13
Serlo Organ Hall and Factory - Methuen, Mass.	14 - 16
Goodspeeds Bookstore - Boston, Mass.	17
Arthur McKenzie	18
Walter Glidden	19 - 20
Judge Cox	21
Charles W. Mann	22
Arthur T. Walker	23
Angelo 'Angy' Ellison	24 - 25
Ray Fremmer	26 - 35
APPENDIX	36 - 37

Edited and Compiled by the recipient

Robert DeLage



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2013

<http://archive.org/details/correspondencefr00frem>

Ray Fremmer
Orant Bay, Jamaica
June, 1965



"Green Park"
Falmouth, Jamaica
Ray Fremmer's
Great House



Flaming Towers Carving
from the demolished wing
of Pine Lodge



Pine Lodge Entrance
and old East Street

The postcard view
Ray Fremmer retained



Construction of
the Boiler Room
building
at Pine Lodge



Pine Lodge Chapel
and Mausoleum

"so untouchable,
so storybook"



Pine Lodge
where Ray Fremmer
entered a doorway
in 1940



On the left
Léon Richet's
"The Forest
of Fountainbleu,
the Grande Route"
an 18 x 10 1/2 foot
painting
originally in
Kellogg Terrace



The Marble Halls
where Ray Fremmer
trespassed
at age fourteen
in 1940



Appleside wing

E. F. Searles'
residence
at Pine Lodge

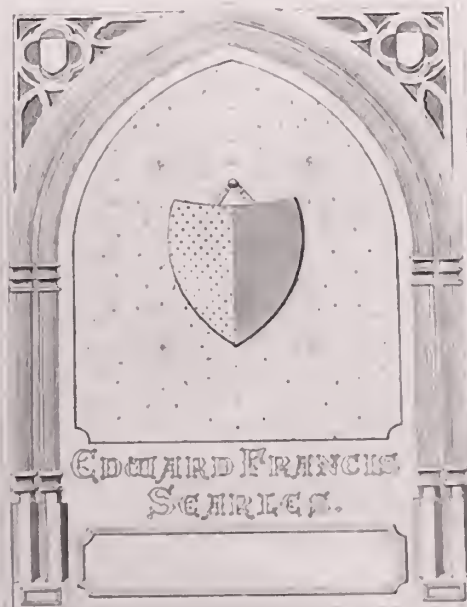


Pine Lodge
mid 1920s

All construction
to the left
of the center tree
was demolished
circa 1930



Mr. Searles'
Bookplate



Tenney Estate
the approach

Pine Lodge Tower
on right



The Tenney Mansion
'Grey Court'
circa 1891



Tenney Estate
'The Lodge' on left

Medford Street
in distance
on upper right



Stillwater Manor
ale, New Hampshire



Stillwater Road
Over the Stone Bridge



The Stone Bridge
On Searles' Road
to Stillwater Manor



he "cerf's dwelling"
on Pond Street
t Stillwater estate



Oak Hill Farm

As viewed
along Pond Street



The Stone
Observation Tower
at Oak Hill





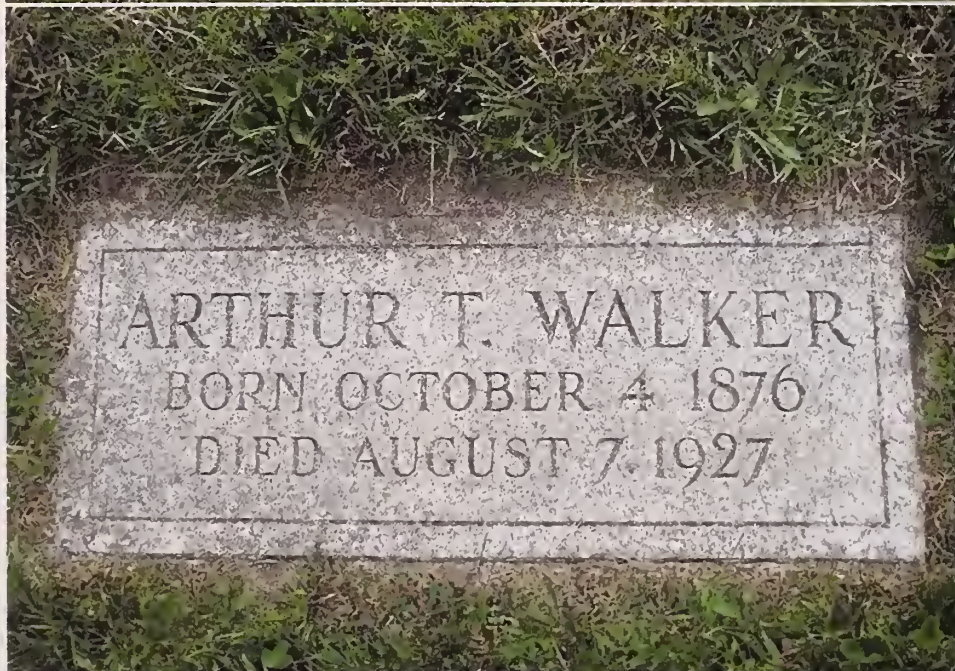
Top Photo: Irving & Casson / A. H. Davenport Co., Cambridge
The source of all decorative work for the Searles mansions.

Bottom Photo: The Old East Street Gate Lodge at Pine Lodge
Ray Fremmer shown peering through the doors.
Photo taken by his brother

Walker Monument
Maple Leaf Cemetery
Chatham, Ontario



Arthur T. Walker
Marker



Entrance to
Maple Leaf Cemetery



Barrington House
Where it all began
for me

July 4th, 1963

The arched entryway
to Barrington House
and
Chamber of Commerce
Booth

Both, now, only
a Memory

Robert DeLage



Pine Lodge

December 13, 1977

I am ashamed to admit I do not know what you are talking about when you refer to the "marble museum" at Pine Lodge. The modern wing the Sisters built is new from scratch, not a veneer of bricks; I saw them build it. No, I would say that Pine Lodge is still there. The little farmhouse in which Searles grew up was finally enveloped by the Greek Revival style Pine Lodge, but very little of that was demolished when the nuns built their wing; just enough to facilitate connecting the new with the old.

You ask me if the mansion, Pine Lodge, was built of wood or stone. Whatever it was built of, and I would say wood, it is still built of the same material, and I would say it is still there; and unless they have painted it, the color is still the same.

In 1940, in broad daylight, I entered the building alone through a door that stood open. The foreman of a crew working nearby asked the man to whom he had been talking if I were the son of one of the workmen. As I disappeared into the building I heard him reply that he did not know who I was. Nobody followed me and I spent the better part of the day wandering through the cavernous building. I was fourteen years old, and finally satisfying a fourteen year old dream; to see what lay within those ghostly grey exterior walls. Inside my entrance door I found myself in a small cramped stairwell, with a small room lying off of it. It was filled with a thousand and one things, so much so that if there had been any furniture in there you couldn't have seen it! Foremost in my memory, for that room, was the metal armor, and the stacks and stacks of books. One book listed all the works of art contained in Pine Lodge. It was a published book, not a manuscript. Next, I went up the stairs. On every floor, for three floors, there were rooms stuffed full of things; these rooms lay off each landing. It was as though the owner of the building had, in his lifetime, a hobby of buying out antique shops and simply piled everything in every room in his house, until he couldn't move too easily in the rooms. On the third floor I went down a narrow corridor, opened a door, expecting to find another room filled with things, and was delighted to find myself on the small balcony of a hall three stories tall, but not as broad as other halls I was to wander into later. All the halls had beautiful marble floors, with marble columns supporting the ceilings. My first impression to register, as I opened that door, was the shiny marble floor far below me, and the second to register were the heroic-sized white marble statues. As there was no way of getting down to the hall floor from the balcony I retraced my steps down the stairwell, and on the ground floor I found another corridor leading to the marble hall. The furniture in the hall was sparse, and I know now it was French; though I didn't know it at the time. It had a lot of brass fittings attached to the sides and curved legs. The brass tied in with the gold color scheme of

Pine Lodge

December 13, 1977 - continued

the interior decoration, even on the fireplaces which were in each room. To tell the truth I was much more impressed by the size of the halls, they seemed so big for the size of the building from the outside, than by the furniture. I do believe that in this Greek Revival style part of the mansion Searles had the good taste not to detract from the feeling of grandeur in his great halls by cluttering them with furniture. At this time, in 1940, nobody was living in the Pine Lodge wing of the mansion. The Rowlands lived in the Appleside wing. A big piano, tall pipe organ, huge marble statues in every hall, and large Paintings on the walls; one of Washington crossing the Delaware, I think, is my impression of Pine Lodge, almost forty years ago.

March 26, 1978

You ask what season of the year it was when I went into the building, Pine Lodge, in 1940. I can't recall, but it wasn't winter. It was warm but it wasn't summer, because I skipped school that day. I entered that part of the mansion that faced the half-timbered gate house that has beautifully carved atlantes holding up the projecting second story. That doorway I entered is now covered, and hidden, by the new building the nuns had built.

March 31, 1978

That view you sent me of Pine Lodge is taken looking north. I would have entered, back in 1940, at the end on the left side of the photo. That end would be the oldest portion of the building; the original house where Frank Searles was born. No, I wasn't afraid one of the workmen might lock me inside. I was too entranced by the adventure of being inside Pine Lodge to be afraid. I left by the same door that I entered; nobody saw me leave. I never told a soul, as it would have been admitting skipping school that day.

I know the view you describe of the red sandstone chapel from the High School. From there it looks so untouchable, so storybook.

Yes, school boys did cross Searles' wall; Tom Dorsey did, not knowing Searles spied him from within. When he asked Tom how he managed to get in, and Tom pointed out where, and how, Searles said, "Well, you go back out the same way you came in."

April 11, 1978

There is some mistake about Dorsey loaning me a Searles scrapbook. He never had it. It was Walter Glidden, Searles' youngest, and most favored employee at Pine Lodge, who lent it to me.

Pine Lodge

March 12, 1979

It is a fact that although Searles owned automobiles, he always used horse and buggy on his rides from Pine Lodge through Highfield, and across Stillwater.

October 21, 1979 .

No, the book I saw on the art treasures of Pine Lodge had no illustrations; only a listing of the art works, as I recall.

Yes, when I brought the copy of my abridged Searles story to the nuns occupying Pine Lodge they gave me, and Dorsey, a tour, from one side of the place to the other, but not at all every room. Even then I never really satisfied myself about Pine Lodge's interiors, and I was never inside the Windham castle.

May 10, 1980

I have a group photo of seven men, one of them my great-grandfather, on a staging in work clothes as masons, at the time of the construction of the gabled building directly behind the fourth elm at the left hand side of the copy photo you sent me showing the entrance to Pine Lodge, at the junction of old East Street and Lawrence Street. That building housed the huge boiler to heat the mansion. My great-grandfather, a French Canadian, could not speak English. It is a very clear photo showing the building yet without its roof. One of the men in the photo, young then, I knew later in life as an old man when he was the town dog catcher; a Mr. Dudley.

June 22, 1980

In the photo (that I'm sending you, and please return) of the building my great-grandfather was working on, the Pine Lodge boiler room; Dudley is at the far left, and Edward Ottot, my ancestor, is the man second from the right, who turned as the picture was being taken.

January 28, 1981

Of course I do remember statues, huge marble statues, in that marble-columned hall, on that dreamlike day so long ago. Although, at the time, I didn't know what dimension the word "heroic" signified, now that I do know, those statues I saw, all alone in that hall, age fourteen, were definitely heroic! I was very impressed with those statues, their size was part of the grandeur of the overall impression the many rooms and shiny marble floors gave me. That fourteen year old boy had never even seen the inside of a museum, nor ever before been inside a millionaire's palace. What did it feel like standing there looking up at those statues, over forty years ago? I felt privileged to be there, as though I was destined to be there, a part of it. The same as I felt when I slipped into

Pine Lodge

January 28, 1981 - continued

the Searles Organ Hall a year earlier, or later, and sat down on a bench at the back and listened, enraptured, while a group of a half-dozen artists played the organ and grand piano for over an hour. And when one asked another who is that boy, me, and the other shrugged, and yet no one said to leave, and I knew they wouldn't because I was destined to be a part of their culture; a kinsman. Anyhow, that's how I felt that day looking up at those huge marble statues, as though I belonged there, a part of that class.

December 31, 1982

I don't know if those rooms that I found cluttered with antiques and books, when I trespassed into the building at age fourteen, were still there when Walter Glidden brought me in at age nineteen because he didn't bring me into that same area, but rather through the marble halls with all the heroic statuary and huge ornate marble fireplaces. No, Glidden made no comment on the art collection as we walked; remember, he was a farmer. If those things of beauty impressed him he gave no verbal indication of it to me.

How long did I spend wandering through the building at age fourteen, when the contractor doing the repairs voiced the thought to an associate that I must be the son of one of the workmen? Perhaps two hours. Did I realize from the dust on the furniture, as you say I wrote in my library manuscript, that no one was living in that wing? Yes, it was obvious from the way things were packed in boxes, and stored on shelves, and lying on top of each other in every room, that there wasn't any space for anyone to be living in there.

Yes, at age fourteen, I explored every room I could find, expecting at every moment to be ordered out of the building.

Did I skip school especially to go there? No, until I arrived there I had no idea repairs were being done, and that there was, because of that, an open door. I probably walked onto the grounds because every boy in town was awed sick over that huge, mysterious old mansion. No, I didn't have to climb over any wall because the gate was open for the workmen.

Stillwater

November 28, 1977

You will love Stillwater on Pond Street when you see it; it was always my favorite Searles place, and I spent more time wandering around the woodlands there, near the house, than any other place.

December 13, 1977

Two years ago, when I visited Oak Hill, in New Hampshire, near Stillwater, I wanted to ask if they would sell it, whoever owns it. That entire area still fascinates me. After crossing the state line into New Hampshire, take your right onto Pond Street. Almost immediately you will see the entrance to Oak Hill, and farther down the road, on your right, Stillwater.

January 2, 1978

If you follow the stone wall up Lawrence Street to Park Street, then up Park to Pleasant, to Searles' boundary with the Tenney estate, pass that until you come to what used to be Searles' land again, still on Pleasant Street, called Highfield, he could cross Pleasant Street there, to land on the other side of the street which also belonged to him, and on which he could ride through the woods straight to Stillwater, entirely on his own land. Discounting the interval on Pleasant Street, however, he did in fact own land, without interruption, from Lawrence Street to Stillwater.

March 5, 1978

Why do I like Oak Hill? Stillwater? Their seclusion, their solid structure appearance, the obvious wealth it took to build them; a desire to own them, envy, yearning to be rich, to be somebody. All this is associated with love of great buildings.

September 18, 1978

Smaller, but fascinating Searles buildings, are Westmoreland, with its dovecotes, and at the extreme other end of Lawrence Road, in Salem, New Hampshire, Crowmont, also with the typical dovecotes; a Searlesian flourish. The first entrance gate on the left, going down Pond Street, leads one to Searles' Oak Hill.

January 20, 1979

The Houston family, at Stillwater, were the source of my information. They worked for Searles and told me the names of his various properties at Stillwater, such as Westmoreland and Crowmont.

Yes, that lodge I described as a cerf's dwelling is across the road from Stillwater manor; just to the west of the manor and across the road.

Stillwater

January 20, 1979 - continued

Crowmont is located at the end of the wall on Lawrence Road. The father of the man who owns the junk car lot lived there for decades, and owned all the land behind that wall; Abdul Fary.

March 12, 1979

It is a fact that although Searles owned a car he always used horse and buggy on his rides through Highfield and across Stillwater.

When I cycled down that road, Searles' private road, all alone, I transported myself into Searles' body and mind by intense thought transfer. For all practical purposes, in those moods of self-hypnosis, I swear I was Searles. I was him; I was in my buggy riding down that peaceful road. The summer day was warm and pleasant and I was hardly aware of Walter Glidden holding the reins sitting beside me. And the spell ended, and I was myself again, laboring over the pedals on my bicycle. I stopped, sat on a rock and rested, over thirty years ago.

April 18, 1979

When I was researching Stillwater I got inside the mansion for about two minutes. I was impressed but, at this time, I can't recall anything. In the late 1940s only Charlie Budrun's family lived there.

Stanton Harcourt

January 2, 1978

No, I never had the opportunity to see the inside of the Stanton Harcourt place in my life. Yes, Frank Andrew owned it during those years that I was doing my research; 1945 to 1948. The time I spent at Stanton Harcourt was in interviewing all those, still there, who knew Searles. They told me that the castle was locked and empty, and I couldn't carry it any farther than that at the time.

Morrison Lodge was, and I would guess still is, on the level land below Stanton Harcourt, in Windham; a part of Searles' grounds; an old house, predating the castle itself. Where I interviewed Dr. Morrison's widow.

January 20, 1979

No, I never visited the place after the nuns bought it from Frank Andrew in 1952.

April 18, 1979

Yes, Frank Andrew, the real estate man, gave me the real estate brochure on the Stanton Harcourt property.

May 10, 1980

During my interviewing days at Stanton Harcourt Dr. Morrison's widow gave me quite a bit of information.

December 31, 1982

Yes, the caretakers at Stanton Harcourt allowed me to walk uphill to the castle, when I was nineteen years old, in 1945. They referred to the castle as "a pile of stones on top of the hill".

Flaming Towers (Carving from Pine Lodge)

January 2, 1978

I have a wood carving, about twenty inches by twenty inches, of the Stanton Harcourt burning towers crest, taken from the dismantled portion of Pine Lodge. Tom Dorsey gave it to me.

October 8, 1978

Somewhere, way back in my days of researching Searles, I found a story about that design that Searles adopted; the one showing the towers with flames between them. On one tower there is a woman, and on the other a man. The story went that this represented neighboring castles. The knight of one fell in love with the damsel of the other, and it caused a feud and the fire. That's all I can remember. Anyway, I have just finished putting that carving on the front of a sideboard I made, and I wanted to get the story straight. Do you have the correct version?

January 20, 1979

I used that same carved panel, that Dorsey gave me, as the door to the sideboard. It took ages to build. I'm impressed by the design of the carving; it fascinates me!

April 18, 1979

My story, that rivals lived in neighboring castles, and that a feud, and castle burning, resulted, was found written out quite dogmatically. I could have read it in the Searles genealogy book, and I think the library has a copy. Searles had his family tree searched and printed elaborately, big glossy pages, and filled with illustrations.

October 21, 1979

Walter Glidden didn't lend me the Searles genealogy book; I recall that I saw it at Nevins Library; but it could have been the Boston Public Library.

I have just compared the flaming towers photo I received from you today with the carving from Pine Lodge, twenty by eighteen inches, that Dorsey gave me, and I am amazed to see that they are not the same. While my bas-relief carving has no door whatever, on ground level or anywhere for that matter, your photo omits the figures of the knight and damsel in mine.

November 20, 1979

I can't remember where I heard the story, or read it. It could have been somebody like Walter Glidden, or it might have been Judge Cox or his wife, as they were close to Frank.

Flaming Towers (Carvings from Pine Lodge)

November 20, 1979 - continued

My carving came from the small demolished portion at the very southernmost wing of Pine Lodge; the other end to Appleside. Tom Dorsey bought it off the wreckers and gave it to me.

I wasn't sure that the tower figures would show up in the photo, I send, taken with my old camera. So I used white chalk to outline the areas. Now, after printing, I see there was no need for the chalk as the figures are quite discernable. While the damsel is in a window, the knight is in bas-relief affixed to the tower wall. I hope this sort of confirms that the legend is not a figment of my imagination.

January 3, 1980

My flaming towers panel is made of carved wood. The carving was painted grey; that's why it looks like plaster in my photo. I framed the panel into the form of a door and mounted it onto the front of the sideboard that I built.

My Medford Street house had the Searles carvings above the doors, the carvings Tom Dorsey gave to me, but which I burned in a mad fit when I sickened of all scholastic writing.

May 10, 1980

That paragraph, from the Ruth Barnard papers, was fascinating. I had never heard it before, and that is not the story I heard. * But it is becoming more obvious how the story went. I feel that somewhere in either the Stanton, or Harcourt, genealogies there must be a detailed account of the burning towers story. The Boston Public Library has a fine genealogical collection. I am wondering if you could check it out.

July 14, 1980

Thanks for the Boston Library copies on the burning towers story from the Harcourt genealogy. I'm going to type up the details and attach them to my burning towers door. That sure is fascinating material that you found in the one available book! * I've read it three times already. I still don't know where I got my story, but I'm sure it was that the families were feuding, then the romance, its discovery, the vengeance battle and the fire.

NOTE: - * See APPENDIX for the material I had sent to Ray Fremmer

Great Barrington

November 28, 1977

Yes, I too was unusually impressed by Great Barrington when I first saw it thirty years ago. I guess I must be getting old when I realize that I have forgotten just how Kellogg Terrace fits into the Searles picture, and know that I used to know. I am sure that it was a part of Mrs. Hopkins' early life, but exactly where in her life I am not sure.

January 2, 1978

My brief visit to Barrington House is so dim in my memory now that it is difficult to recall.

Irving and Casson Co. - Interior Decorators

January 20, 1979

I found Lewis Brown, of Irving and Casson, through Searles' head caretaker, Walter Glidden. He told me and I met Brown at the factory before it folded up.

May 10, 1980

Irving and Casson Company, Searles' interior decorators, had a factory in Cambridge. While at Tufts University working on Searles I visited there, and was sent up to the top floor to the woodcarvers and actually talked to some of the older hands who recalled working at Pine Lodge. It was a marvelous loft filled with intricate carvings scattered all over the place, and hanging from the ceilings. But when I had returned twenty-five, or more, years later, in the early 1970s, they had gone out of business, the building was up for sale, the loft all but empty, and only one former employee still there as watchman. At first hostile, he quickly warmed up and told me some interesting stories about huge mansions upon which he had worked.

March 17, 1981

In 1975, while in the Boston area, I visited once more, after an interval of twenty-seven years, the Irving and Casson interior decorating factory where all the Searles carvings were done; at Lechmere, Cambridge. An empty building, except for a watchman. He let me browse through. On the top floor, where I interviewed the old woodcarvers so long ago, only ghosts, emptiness, and silence. It is a huge building, maybe six floors, old brick. On one floor I found a beautiful piece of genuine leather, in green, for upholstering a piece of furniture. I offered to buy it, but he gave it to me. Just last week I upholstered an antique chair with it, and it looks good enough for Searles himself, believe me! There was only one piece of carving left there, on loan to a flower shop on the ground floor, from the watchman who claimed ownership. It was a huge oak wall panel, with the most intricately carved pheasants on it. You can't miss the building. It is just a stone's throw from the Lechmere rapid transit to Boston station, and the name, "Irving and Casson Company", is still there high up on the side of the brick building.

NOTE: The 'flower shop' mentioned above, was . . .
The Plantery, at 25 First Street, Cambridge

Tenney Castle

March 26, 1978

Your news, at least news to me, that the Tenney Castle burned last April, comes as a shock to me! The end of a dream since childhood. Even as a six year-old I can remember walking up the hill to that castle, so entranced by the grandeur of it. Then, years later, climbing the castle's tower, to its cupola, and seeing my own grandfather's name carved up there, where he had put it in 1914, when he painted the castle. He was the town's best and most sought-after house painter. From that time I daydreamed of owning it one day. Then, years later, I saw it empty and for sale, and dreamed of marrying a rich widow to buy it for me. Well, that dream has now ended.

May 26, 1978

Those photos of Tenney's castle you sent tear my heart out. How could anyone live, who would burn a roof like that!

July 18, 1978

I was fascinated by the photos you sent of Tenney's castle in ruins, and it sets my mind to dream of fixing it up.

September 18, 1978

Your photos of the ruins are very nice, and show so much left. Who wouldn't be proud to own such a magnificent pile of stone. I would!

October 21, 1979

For me it started at age six, or seven, when the ten year-old boy next door took me with him one day to bring his father his lunch, where he worked at Tenney's estate, circa 1932. Walking that long driveway with him, from High Street up to the castle, and being awed by all the exotic-looking imported trees, and the monstrous barking dogs, barking down at us behind the castle, as we approached from the back, burned indelibly into me because of my size; so small compared to the driveway, the unusual trees, the dogs, and the castle. Because things seem bigger to a little kid, I received an unrealistic introduction to what would become important in my life. From that time, nothing was as important to me as long driveways, beautiful trees, and castles!

July 11, 1981

After Tufts University dismissed me I was sort of a misfit for years. I didn't have the money for a car, and couldn't drive anyhow; and so rode everywhere on an English Raleigh bicycle, much to the dismay of my mother who said I was in my second childhood, at the age of twenty-three, in 1949. I visited her

Tenney Castle

July 11, 1981 - continued

less, and spent most of my time at the small house out in the country, which I built when I was twenty-one, in 1947. Anyhow, not working, and riding a bicycle, and frequenting the river swimming hole daily, as a rebound back to nature from the dry academic life of the university, I fell in, incongruously, with others who, like me, were not working, riding bicycles, and frequenting the swimming hole; boys around sixteen years old. Well, I suppose it looked bad, but as a rebel I didn't care, or what others said or thought. I was doing what I wanted to do, and that was all that mattered. In the dead bitter cold of winter I would slink back to my folks' house to keep warm, but my father resented what he thought was my superior university-fostered attitude and I was soon back at my little house everytime, freezing or not. Anyhow, again, one of those teenagers told me about the building they called "The Lodge", that resembled a European hunting lodge, on the Tenney estate, and how, while sledding near it he, and others, had discovered an open window and had gone inside. At that time the Tenneys still owned the estate but rarely visited it. Bicycling the three miles daily, from my little house to the river on the outskirts of town, I always stared at that building over the stone wall as I peddled. This boy, nine years my junior, enticed me to go with him to the building, saying that Mr. Monroe, the caretaker, never bothered them while they were sledding there. I couldn't resist; danger of getting caught or not. All the downstairs windows were locked, but climbing to an upstairs window I went in, down the stairs and let in my friend. Well, this episode sticks more in my memory than my excursion into Pine Lodge, probably because we took a few little ornaments out of a china cabinet. How he knew where the key to that cabinet was hidden, by Monroe, I'll never know. I can still see the gilt-edged cup and saucer marked, "Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense". that I took, and the cluster of little brass bells that Jim took. We explored every room! It had a big hall in the center, and bedrooms off the passageway upstairs. The empty building, the stealthy entry, the fear of anyone catching us, and the beautiful things in that cabinet, linger in my mind still. Suddenly, I now remember the deer heads mounted high up on the walls of that hall, and that was thirty years ago! The rich are so rich, and their things are so nice. Taking that cup and saucer, petty theft or not, made me feel a kinship with the rich every time I looked at it in my lonely little house.

NOTE: "Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense" - Motto of the British Order of the Garter.
Definition: "Shamed be he who thinks evil of it."

Serlo Organ Hall and Factory

March 5, 1978

If I could hear the blasting cords of the Methuen organ again I would want so much to have it from one of those great old boys whose busts Searles had placed in the walls of the testing hall in the Methuen organ factory; busts which I saw as a fourteen year-old, filled with awe, entranced with dreams of splendor, wealth, and being somebody more than a mill rat's son.

October 21, 1979

I will tell you of my adventures in that old organ factory, almost forty years ago, but understand that it was not as a rich man's son on a spree; it was someone from skidrow aggressively trying to climb out of that situation by taking what he could out of an old building that fairly reeked of the millionaire's money that went into the fantastic interior decorations of the shabby old woolen mill the exterior appeared to be, and for which it had originally been built.

I knocked on the back door and I asked the man if I could have the two-wheeled cart, and the elegant pieces of quartered oak that had been thrown into the cellar hole out behind the factory. He brought me up onto the third floor, to an old man with white hair way down over his ears; and this man who made the organs there, Ernest M. Skinner himself, left his work and came all the way downstairs to see what this little boy wanted! He said, "You can take the cart, but we need the boards." I was age nine, the year, 1935. Three years later he was bankrupt, and locked out of the building.

In the dead of winter we heard the news; it spread around the wrong side of the tracks like wildfire, even to my ears, age thirteen: you can get into the organ factory through a cellar window, and there's nobody there now, nobody owns it now, and they've all gone away forever, and you can take whatever you want, and it's all free!

Gosh, it was dark looking down into that cellar. Who'll go down and run up the stairs and open the back door for the gang? No volunteers; nobody had reason enough to be brave enough except one, me! I had to have part of the millionaire's trappings that are in there, to help me get away from skidrow. Smart guy, after everyone is inside I close the door and lock it, to give us time and to slow down the opposition. Now I'm in a millionaire's factory; many of whose rooms resemble a millionaire's mansion. Grab, Ray, grab while you can; what you see here is money, riches, a way out of poverty. Only I thought these thoughts; the others went their own way, doing what I don't know. I found ingots three inches in diameter and three inches tall, with a lip, like a top hat resting on its top, but heavy as lead. I thought they were lead, and that I could sell them. So I dropped as many

Serlo Organ Hall and Factory

October 21, 1979 - continued

as I could find out the back window into the snow. They later turned out to be pure tin, worth many more times the price of lead; they were used in making the organ pipes. The closest I got to a millionaire's mansion, that could be taken, was way up in the attic on the third floor, under the roof. There was an old, abandoned, quartered oak carved organ facade; a really beautiful piece of woodwork! I had to have that if nothing else; it would make me somebody special, not just a mill rat's son. I remember somebody was there with me in the attic. I think it was Georgie White. As I opened the attic window he scoffed, "You can't take that. It'll break when you drop it, and how will you carry it home?" It was sort of a palladian-designed piece, with heavily-carved moulding around the three openings; the three arches of which terminated in hand carved acanthus leaves. It easily came apart into three pieces. With difficulty I managed to get each of them through the window. I can still see the dark pieces of splendid woodwork silhouetted against the dazzling white snow as they left my grasp and dropped down silently, effortlessly, down onto the soft snow. And Searles whispered to me so that I alone could hear, "Son, take these things that were mine, for your own, and be as rich as me forever!" And I was afraid that the people in the houses far away, across the river, way up on Union Street, could see me taking Searles' things and would call the police. To fail now pounded in my brain. I must work faster; I am not here on a child's adventure like the rest of them. I have come to take part of the wealth that Searles took from that old woman, Mrs. Hopkins, and I must succeed!

The fabulous medieval paintings, a triptych; panels two-feet by four-feet, leaning against a wall in a store room on the third floor, just above the roof of the columned portico facing Broadway, I left behind to be burned to ashes the following year, alas. As I examined the ancient wooden panels, an inch thick, my eyes slipped to the cars moving up and down Broadway, so far below me, and I marvelled at the vast difference between the world I now found myself in and the world of the people in those cars. The ancient paint must have been good paint; the colors were still strong. The man's face looked so real; you could almost feel his beard.

The busts of Mozart and Bach and Beethoven, way up in niches on the walls of the awe-inspiring paneled organ test hall, would have to wait until another day. Likewise, the glittering, thousand-prismed chandelier. After all, this was my first attack on the mighty millionaire's fortress, and at age thirteen it's one step at a time. The carved organ facade must get home first. By a miracle our trespass had gone undiscovered; we were out the back door of the building and struggling madly through the deep snow without a single, "Stop thief!", and heading for

Serlo Organ Hall and Factory

October 21, 1979 - continued

the frozen river. Once across the solid ice, up the fifty-foot embankment, and onto Union Street, we breathed more easily at last; successful, accomplished rebels against the rich!

By four o'clock in the afternoon in Methuen, Massachusetts, in the dead of winter, it is getting dark. And I waited, alone, with my sled, at the edge of the ice on the far side of the river. As the dusk deepened I headed across; the five-foot long big-boy's size sled in tow. If anyone in the houses up on Union Street, or in the American Legion building directly across from the organ factory, saw me now they would only think that I was on my way home from play. I loaded the panels and the ingots, feeling tiny beside the huge old building, and so alone in the white stillness, with the night smothering down. Crossing the river ice elation overcame me, bursting my brain, like Richard the Lion Hearted coming home with the spoils of war. The following summer saw my millionaire's carved oak panels installed in the five by twelve foot retreat I had built for myself in the back yard, and I was on the road to owning my own mansion!

November 20, 1979

No, my father never questioned me about the organ panels because I never showed them to anyone. When later, I returned from the Navy, and turned twenty-one, and my folks moved and I bought a lot of my own, I tore down my little retreat and brought all the material, including the panels, to my own lot at the edge of town on Medford Street. From there the whereabouts, or destiny of those carved oak acanthus leaves and heavy mouldings, and quartered oak polished panels, and fluted columns supporting the arches, escapes me.

December 31, 1982

Did my trespass at the age of thirteen, or fourteen, into the locked old organ factory cover a period of years, or a brief time? Just that one time I believe. Although, after forty-two years, I admit that I'm not sure if I went in there once or twice. Yes, I guess I did go back. My junkman friend, Arthur McKenzie, told me that the ingots I brought to him, thinking they were lead, were not lead at all but very valuable block tin used in making the organ pipes. I vaguely think I went back to gather as many more ingots as I could find on a workbench on the third floor. My greatest regret, to this day, is that I left behind the most valuable thing of all in that immense old building; the priceless medieval painting, on wooden panels, I discovered in an attic loft. Along with everything else, that art treasure Searles collected on his many buying sprees in Europe, went up in flames when the factory burned several years after my trespass.

Goodspeeds Book Store - Milk St. Boston

January 2, 1978

When Ben Rowland sold off, as a lot, a room full of books to Goodspeeds in Boston, and I discovered, by chance, the lot at Goodspeeds, and, for instance, one book in that lot had been given to Searles by his Sunday School teacher, and I wrote it up in the Lawrence Evening Tribune, only then did Ben make contact to say that he wanted the book back.

March 26, 1978

Yes, you deduced correctly that Searles drew sketches on the end pages of books he was reading, for building additions. I discovered that from the books I bought at Goodspeeds. They were done in pencil, and I remember thinking that they were quite well done. I have no idea what I did with any of those books, other than the one I gave to Tom Dorsey, which she gave back to Ben Rowland.

October 21, 1979

Yes, that discovery at Goodspeeds, a hundred years ago it seems, was pure luck! It was just by chance that I happened to go in there when all those books Ben Rowland sold them were stacked out on the tables by the hundreds. All those books on the very large tables had just been classified as "junk", and were on their way outside to the "ten cents-a-book" shelves. The man said to pick out what I wanted, at ten cents each. I might have selected a half-dozen books. I only took the ones I took because of the personal inscriptions, in ink, like the one given as a present to Searles from his Sunday School teacher.

January 3, 1980

The Searles books, at Goodspeeds, had his bookplates. I referred to the books as "junk" because they were the books they didn't want; thought they couldn't sell easily. They covered a table twenty feet long by four feet wide. The manager said, before I started looking through them, that there wasn't much of anything in those on the table. What there was in the ones they had selected out of the lot, that wasn't on the table I don't know. Surely the ones they had selected would have been the more expensive books; large size books, first editions, rare books, and art books with large engravings or prints suitable for framing. The books on the table were not in bad condition, just not of great interest in content. He said they were going to be put outside on the ten cents-a-book shelves. The ones I selected were for the sake of the personal inscriptions written on the flyleaves. I cannot recall what the bookplate was like.

Arthur McKenzie - Scrap Dealer

November 20, 1979

Later I took those ingots to my favorite scrap dealer, Max Silverman. The next day I told my mentor in the business, sort of my adopted father, Arthur McKenzie. He was furious and told me that I had made a horrible blunder; that those were not lead, as I thought, but block tin. That I must go straight back to Max in nearby Lawrence, tell him that my mother was very upset and that I was under the legal age to sell them; here's your money back, give me back my lead! I got them back, as directed, and Arthur gave me four times, or ten times the price of lead, as he promised he would.

December 31, 1982

My junkman friend, Arthur McKenzie, told me that the ingots were not lead at all, but very valuable block tin used in making the organ pipes.

Yes, I'm in the salvage business here on the island; it's the source of my income. Sort of a legacy, you might say, from my old mentor in the profession, Arthur McKenzie.

Walter Glidden - Pine Lodge Caretaker

November 28, 1977

Walter Glidden, a country boy caretaker, who obediently listened to Searles play on the organ whenever loneliness closed in on him.

April 11, 1978

There is some confusion about Tom Dorsey loaning me a Searles scrapbook. Tom never had it. It was Walter Glidden, Searles' youngest and most favored employee at Pine Lodge, who lent it to me.

May 8, 1978

Walter Glidden was not a young man when I knew him. I meant that he was the youngest employee Searles had, and that he was favored because he along was singled out to sit and listen to Searles play his mood music. All the employees came from the same part of Maine. Searles chose Walter for his audience when he felt lonely, and wanted company while he played on those great instruments at Pine Lodge. In fact, Walter was not an old man either when I knew him. He may possibly have been around sixty when I met him.

January 20, 1979

I found Lewis Brown, of Irving and Casson, through Searles' head caretaker, Walter Glidden. He told me and I met Brown at the factory before it folded up.

October 21, 1979

I approached Walter Glidden and I just told him I was writing on Searles and asked him if he would talk to me, as he was the head caretaker and lived on the place. On his own initiative he showed me through the unoccupied southern ell of Pine Lodge; not the Appleside end where his boss, Rowland, lived. At that time there were signs reading, "Keep Out", but I was going to Walter Glidden with a legitimate purpose and I walked past the sign to his house, and he greeted me warmly and appointed a time, after working hours, for me to return for an interview; of which there were several. Walter was no crumb, he treated everyone fairly. It was Walter who took me into the mansion, but not the crypt where Searles was interred. Somehow Tom Dorsey got permission on that and he, and I, went in there and explored that beautiful little red sandstone chapel from top to bottom. I believe Dorsey got the key from the nuns.

December 31, 1982

You ask if Walter Glidden, Rowland's caretaker for Searles' estate, waited for a day when Rowland was away, to show me

Walter Glidden - Pine Lodge Caretaker

December 31, 1982 - continued

through the unused wing. No, that wing is so far away from the section in which Rowland lived that he would not have had the slightest idea that we were in there. Anyhow, Glidden had that privilege; remember he worked for Searles long before Rowland was born. I don't know if those rooms that I found cluttered with antiques and books, when I trespassed into the building at age fourteen, were still there when Glidden brought me in at age nineteen because he didn't bring me into that same area, but rather through the marble halls with all the heroic statuary and huge ornate marble fireplaces. No, Glidden made no comment on the art collection as we walked; remember, he was a farmer. If those things of beauty impressed him he gave no verbal indication of it to me.

Judge Cox

November 28, 1977

Judge Cox's wife, who knew Searles on his own social level.

November 20, 1979

I can't remember where I heard the story (flaming towers) or read it. It might have been Judge Cox, or his wife, as they were close to Frank.

January 3, 1980

From boyhood Searles was called "Frank". People alive during my years of research (1945 to 1948), who knew him personally, like Judge Cox, called him "Frank."

July 14, 1980

Though I talked with Judge Cox's wife for hours, I never saw her in the flesh, and this talking by the hour on the phone infuriated my father. She just would not see me, though she liked me and would not leave the phone until my father got furious. She must have been very shy. But I am sure, when the judge had me down to the house for an interview with him one evening, she must have been peeking at me out of some dark corner somewhere, all during the time I was there. They were both wonderful to me in the amount of time and wonderful details they gave me.

Charles W. Mann

December 13, 1977

I have to explain that the subject of the Manns is rather emotionally charged for me. The 'W', in Charles W. Mann, stands for Warren, and they called their son, Charles W. Mann III, Warren, so as not to confuse father with son. Well, Warren was one of the few friends I had in Methuen, until his death under tragic circumstances. This death seemed so unacceptable to me, so wrong for someone who had so much to live for; an only son, just married, future assured. I never went back there again!

June 19, 1978

I was researching Searles long before I knew Warren. I was seated in their living room and given full access to everything they had. It was then that Helen Mann, Warren's mother, had discovered the old friendship between her mother and my grandmother. Warren and I became close friends! He was their only son. So careful, never drove fast, so respectful. Then the Army, the automobile accident with other soldiers in the car, and death; the third of the same name, would have inherited so much, and died so young! Charles W. Mann I, Warren's grandfather, worked for Searles, selling him all his stone.

July 18, 1978

The quarry that old Charles W. Mann worked for all of the granite that Searles used in his building projects, was in Pelham, New Hampshire; a very impressive hole, now filled with water. I loved to swim there. Charles Warren Mann III and I used to go for a swim there after work. It is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. F. D. Bedard, Route 2, Box 359, Pelham, N.H. 03076

Arthur T. Walker

January 2, 1978

I never spent one minute researching Walker. Yes, I knew Frank Andrew well enough; he lived on Pleasant Street. Every day on my way home I saw him sitting in his living room reading his newspaper. I interviewed him on Searles. He knew Searles, and after his death handled all the Searles property sales for Walker, and later for Walker's heirs in Canada.

NOTE: Arthur T. Walker died at Stanton Harcourt, in Windham, on Sunday, August 7th, 1927. He is buried in his home town of Chatham, Ontario, at Maple Leaf Cemetery.

Angelo Ellison - "Angy"

November 28, 1977

Angy never told me if he inherited more than Searles' will left him. From my hours of research I doubt very much that Walker ever passed a cent more to Angy than what the will stated. Walker's lawyers successfully withstood Angy's attempts to break the will. Though there was a clause in the will that if anyone tried to break it, his share would forfeit, I believe Angy told me he still received his \$10,000.

In Yonkers, after lunch, when Angy was showing me all these priceless old photos of Searles and his mansions, etc., in two or three old albums, through which I was thumbing, as he had offered to loan me whatever I wanted, I turned a page to what I can only describe as a remarkable photo of a handsome young man. When I asked who it was, Angy said it was himself when he first met Searles, and that was the only photo he would not loan me. The man with whom I had lunch was bald, with a long face, and a large nose; yet the man and the youth in the photo was the same person.

January 2, 1978

True, Angy did see that I was sincere. Though I did not drive at the time, he saw that I found transport from Methuen to his door, so keen was my interest.

You're right, Angy did set himself up in business. He was a partner in a Chevrolet dealership, and I met him in the showroom and then we went to lunch. My impressions: a very warm person, easy to talk to, no pretense, straight and lean, a family man, long face, big nose, bald or balding, the face of an old Greek, a very nice guy. No, he never told me that he ever visited Methuen, I don't think. I'm not sure now; that's over thirty years ago. But I do remember that people in the Stanton Harcourt grounds, who knew both him and Searles, said he visited them. In fact, he sent them Christmas cards every year. They gave me his address in Yonkers, New York. But I can't remember just who now. It could have been Dr. Morrison's widow. And to think that last October I was within ten miles of Yonkers, on a trip to an antique shop that proved fruitless. Incredibly, at that time, I had the impulse to go on to Yonkers to see if Angy was still alive, but I returned to New York for more pressing business. It's strange that your first letter arrived when it did, as I had only been back on the island a week, after a three-month's absence in Europe, New York, and California.

March 31, 1978

You ask how I got to Angy. Let me think; that was about thirty years ago, imagine! I can't remember how I got to

Angelo Ellison - "Angy"

March 11, 1978 - continued

New York City, but I know that I went there first. I didn't fly, so it was either by bus or train. There, in the Hall of Records, the transcript of the trial trying to break the will was fascinating to me because of the chance to read letters actually written by Searles to Angy, that were copied into the transcript. I don't remember, either, how I got from New York City to Yonkers. It could have been by bus, or train, or hitchhiking. I used to hitchhike all over the U.S. and Canada!

March 31, 1978

I feel, even after all these years, a personal affection for Angy; not only because he was so kind to me, but also trusted me enough to lend me those wonderful photos for my book.

July 18, 1978

I met Angy in Yonkers, talked with him, ate with him, won his affection to the point where he loaned me a large number of photos that he had held as priceless since his youth,

January 3, 1980

No, Angy Ellison didn't tell me the flaming towers story. Whoever told me, told me about it because it was either there in front of us at the time, or a picture of it was in front of us. Neither of these conditions was there with Angy. No, I didn't stay overnight in Yonkers. I never went back to show him my manuscript, and I never wrote him of my progress. Yes, he was interested enough in what I was doing to lend me the photos, which I returned by mail, after copying them.

November 8, 1980

I've been sitting here trying to think which of all the people I interviewed about Searles was really the best, through being close to Searles, and it is a toss-up between Angy and Walter Glidden. But Angy takes it!

Ray Fremmer

November 28, 1977

In twenty years maybe three or four people have written to me about Edward F. Searles. I was the first person to thoroughly research Searles, and at a time early enough to catch people still alive who knew him! When I say thoroughly research, I know that no one can catch every loose end of someone's life. What I mean is that I worked at researching thoroughly and long. I took a lot of trips and had that type of consuming curiosity that does end up with a lot of valuable vignettes of the man. No one before had cared that much, or had been willing to spend that much of their lives trying to learn something about Edward Searles. I'm not sorry. It was interesting, and I sincerely believe that I know Searles better than anyone now alive! I say this because I had been in touch with Angelo Ellison, the elevator boy, whom he befriended, Walter Glidden, a country boy caretaker, who obediently listened to Searles play on the organ whenever loneliness closed in on him, Judge Cox's wife, who knew him on his own social level, and so on.

Well, you're right, I did actually love the Searles places, and this love did show in my book. I was always a loner, so I guess I transferred my affection to those marvelous buildings. It was a perfect case of awe for grandeur, a product of poverty; not just yearning not to be poor, but trying desperately to know the grandeur of wealth, the homes of one wealthy man, by getting as close as possible to them, even inside of them. I think this odd misguided love of buildings came out, or came through, in what I wrote in that original 35,000-word paper on Searles. It is too bad that I can't locate either the hand-written, or typed copy, both of which I disposed of twenty years ago, or more, through Tom Dorsey, of Methuen, and he can't remember who got them. You're quite right; no one else on earth has given as much of their time, or life, to Searlesiana as I have!

December 13, 1977

No, I didn't save my original notes for my unabridged Searles book. I was so wearied by the work, and glad to have it all together in one readable version that I was happy to destroy the evidence of the toil and effort of the threshing about.

What brought me to Jamaica? I'm going to be perfectly honest with you, at all costs; the lure of passionate romance in the heat of a lush tropical island! Did I find it? Oh yes, oh verily yes! No regrets. Am I an archeologist? I will allow you to answer that for yourself on the basis of the two pulls * from two different publications which I have enclosed for your own collection. No, I don't work for the Jamaican government as a rule, though the Morant Bay dig I did do for them. Last year I unearthed a wonderful selection of fifteenth and sixteenth

NOTE: * see APPENDIX

Ray Fremmer

December 13, 1977 - Continued

century Hafner ware in the cellar of the ruins of an old German castle, and I am still working on the restoration of the artifacts which I brought home with me. But most of my time, for the past fifteen years, has been spent restoring this eighteenth century mansion of mine, "Green Park".

January 2, 1978

My life is now wrapped up in the restoration of this old house. No, it's not really an historic house. The only thing historic about it is about forty feet from the front door, the tomb of Judge John Bradshaw, his lead coffin which I have unearthed. He was the chief judge who signed the death warrant for the beheading of King Charles I, of England. I have only eight acres of the original thirteen hundred, but the old house is mine. It is a typical eighteenth century plantation house; large but not elaborate, and much neglected over the decades, call it abandoned, before I bought it. In fifteen years I have put thousands of man-hours into it, and now am filled with the fear that I may never complete it!

Yes, the man you see in the archeological material that I send you is me.

March 26, 1978

Tom Dorsey wrote the article (1976 Bicentennial Methuen) which you xeroxed and sent to me. The little cottage on Medford Street, which he mentioned, was the first house I had ever built, and incorporated parts of several different mansions; Nevins, Searles, Tenney, and Suttons, which I had saved over the years. The Maple Street house, the last one I reconstructed, before leaving for Jamaica, is all Nevins; moved on low-bed trailers by me in three pieces.

April 15, 1978

Nothing could make me leave Jamaica, it is in my blood. After fifteen years here, being entirely engrossed in restoring this old house, of 1764, I now see what little progress I have made though I work at it religiously.

In Methuen you have seen the Masonic Temple, built by Searles in memory of his father. I did a copper-plate etching of it while I was a student at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and I never kept the plate, or even a print. I gave Tom Dorsey one, and after seventeen years I have begged him for it, as last season, in Europe, I discovered that my own ancestors were accomplished engravers of note!

Ray Fremmer

May 8, 1978

My Medford Street house, as it appears today, is not what it was when I first built it. It was such an architectural fantasy when I first built it that the neighbors all complained with such bitterness that in order to sell it and get out of there I remodeled it completely, destroying all traces of Searles, Tenney, and Nevins; at least on the outside. The front half of the house I moved intact from the Nevins mansion. The dormer window, now at the front of the house, was once at the very back of the Nevins mansion, and gave light to the largest cedar closet that I had ever seen; so big, that the people I sold it to used it as a bedroom for their son. The very back room of that Medford Street house has panels from the Sutton mansion in Andover. Originally my little house had the Searles crests over both the front door and the garage, carved in wood and direct from Pine Lodge; but those are all gone now!

Richard Michael is my legal name; Ray, is just a nickname. The man who wrote the article about me in 1948, Bill Collins, Jr., is no longer living; I really think he liked me to give me a build-up like that. (Reference: "The Searles Saga" - page 114) One successful New York novelist, Charles Calitri, told me that article did more to hurt any creative talent that I had than to help it, because it gave me undeserved publicity. I now believe that if anyone hurt any creative ability I had, it was Charles Calitri. He wrote a book based on an incident in my life and sold it to Hollywood. It was called, "Strike Heaven on the Face"; a really unfair, distorted version of the facts.

May 26, 1978

I love old houses, for I not only study them but I work on them like a zealot! I dismantled the Nevins mansion in Methuen, and I learned a lot about eighteenth century houses right there that long summer. Here in Jamaica I have salvaged things from eleven demolished buildings in the process of obtaining numerous authentic materials for this old house of mine, on which I have devoted fifteen years of my life. This is not mine, but I believe it . . . "A good house is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, preserved and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life". For years I have been collecting material for a book on the great houses of Jamaica.

The Calitri book is a Signet book, published in 1958, and my name is weakly disguised to "Roger Frennel".

July 18, 1978

Actually my house was not at 103 Pleasant Street. I only received my mail in that box; my little house was actually down that side street there, Medford Street, about the fourth house down on the right side. You can tell it by the architecture, if you look for it.

Ray Fremmer

July 18, 1978 - continued

Yes, police officer J. Milton Lodge gave me those photos, of the great organ in the Searles music hall, for my story that I gave to the library. He liked me. His son was ahead of me in school and liked my sister.

I work for myself, on this house; I don't work for anyone else. Green Park is located in Falmouth; five miles from the ocean.

I obtained those bits of the dismantled portion of Pine Lodge for the Medford Street house. Tom Dorsey, being a reporter at that time, knew of the demolition; I didn't! He went there and got those carvings for me. They were very heavily-carved portions of exterior ornamental work; angels, and crest, and fleur-de-lis. They were terribly heavy, measuring, semi-circular, three by four feet! Much to my neighbors' annoyance I nailed them to my house above the doors. When I remodeled the house I destroyed them; though I deeply regret it now.

Speaking of postcards; one I have is one of the only two things that I treasured, connected to Searles, that I brought to Jamaica. I left all traces of Searles behind me when I left the States twenty-one years ago, in 1957, except for this postcard and the carving of Searles' crest. It's a color view of East Street going straight through the estate, which means that the photo, used for the postcard, was taken before Searles bought old East Street from the town and rerouted it around his estate.

September 18, 1978

I have thirty-two framed pictures hanging in my house at Green Park; two by three foot enlargements of originals that are in the British Museum, or the New York Public Library. Some are from my own snapshots that I had blown up to poster size; all on Jamaican history. I have a dozen more on order.

January 20, 1979

The enlargements are of eighteenth century engravings, reproductions of Fremmer engravings, famous visitors to Green Park; Johnny Cash, Billy Graham, and others. I just got back to Jamaica two days ago, after three months in New York, and found three letters from you waiting for me.

March 12, 1979

I've been in New York three months. It took a month to find the car I wanted. I spent about a month in the V.A. Hospital for an operation on my head, trigeminal neuralgia.

Ray Fremmer

March 12, 1979 - continued

They put a piece of plastic inside my skull. I shopped for antiques; bought a bronze statue, hundreds of glass prisms to build my own chandelier, and bronze arms to repair another eighteenth century chandelier I have in the house here. It takes days and hours of searching to find such items. I had giant reproductions made of eighteenth century prints on Jamaica. I researched at the New York Library of the Performing Arts for everything I could find on an actress from Lawrence, Thelma Todd, who committed suicide, it was said, decades ago. I researched, at the New York Public Library, more material for a paper I am doing on the subject of a famous painting, "Pinkie", hanging in a gallery in California. And I took in just about every new film to hit New York in those three months; the result of being isolated in Jamaica for so long!

April 18, 1979

Yes, I was still in Methuen when Mrs. Searles' tomb was looted.

I did all my research on Searles between 1945 and 1948, when I wrote up all my notes into final form.

The name, "Irving Frihling", provokes recognition somehow, somewhere, far back in my memory, but much too vaguely.

October 21, 1979

For me it started at age six, or seven, when the ten year-old boy next door took me with him one day to bring his father his lunch, where he worked at Tenney's estate, circa 1932. Walking that long driveway with him, from High Street up to the castle, and being awed by all the exotic-looking imported trees, and the monstrous barking dogs, barking down at us behind the castle, as we approached from the back, burned indelibly into me because of my size; so small compared to the driveway, the unusual trees, the dogs, and the castle. Because things seem bigger to a little kid, I received an unrealistic introduction to what would become important in my life. From that time, nothing was as important to me as long driveways, beautiful trees, and castles!

I'm working on my house and it is looking a little more each day like maybe Searles would want it to look. I am paneling the last room in the house to be done; one wall left to finish. Eighteenth century wood used entirely; the panels out of an eighteenth century house here, now gone.

Ray Fremmer

November 20, 1979

In the last sixteen years I have written to two or three archives in England, and I paid for copies of all the eighteenth century correspondence to the builder of this house. He wasn't an especially colorful man, but he was very intelligent!

The money, the polish, and the amount of fine woodwork is certainly not here in my old house, as it is in Pine Lodge, Stanton Harcourt, and Great Barrington. However, I have Frank Searles' discerning eye, and I am sure he would give me an 'A' for effort if he could see what I have devoted sixteen years of my life to. My paneling is not oak, which I love, but mahogany, out of necessity. Oak has a very short life in Jamaican houses due to the termites' preference for it above all other woods. My roughly-hewn eighteenth century timbers, twelve by fourteen inches in size, would be out of place in Pine Lodge, but they have a rustic appeal of strength here. I only have one marble floor, and no marble columns at all, but because I laid the marble myself, after spending ten or twelve years collecting it piece by piece, you can understand how much that one floor means to me.

January 3, 1980

No, I haven't touched the prisms yet, for the chandelier, because I still don't have enough. My project here is no where near done, though the main house is getting close. The two wings have hardly been touched yet. The marble floor I put in measures twelve by eighteen feet. It's just within the huge fifteen-foot tall doors, on the south side, that open into the main hall. I put the Searles-crest-door sideboard facing the entrance doors in the reception hall, that is, just within those columns you see in the photo I sent. I had help setting the stones of the floor.

Yes, I found the lead coffin of the first owner of Green Park, Judge John Bradshaw, in the grave badly mutilated by grave robbers, so the skeleton was a shambles.

That cut-stone, one-story building, to the right of the big house, was the kitchen. See the chimney? That cast-iron oval window was made in England and was set with Crown glass originally, in the eighteenth century. Those columns at the main entrance are made of cast iron. The cannons came from captured ships auctioned in Falmouth harbor to the highest bidder, who broke them up for salvage, as lumber and hardware were worth their weight in gold.

Yes, all the material from my little backyard retreat went to the Medford Street house. No, when I did my research of Searles there was no active historical society in town. I did my research, and work, on Medford Street in that first house I built.

Ray Fremmer

May 10, 1980

No, I never had my Searles story copyrighted. No, there were never two versions of my abridged paper on Searles; the copy I gave the nuns at Pine Lodge is an exact duplicate of the Nevins Library copy, as it was photo-copied from it. My original, full-length version I had written out in longhand. Then I had that typed. Then, after years went by, and I had acquired a typewriter, I myself typed out the abridged version. I then sold the typed, full length, version for \$5.00. Later I gave the abridged version to Nevins Library when I left for Jamaica.

In 1944, the way the war was going, I thought it might be over before I could see action if I didn't enlist immediately. I turned eighteen after I enlisted.

At Tufts University I majored in English, taking every writing course the university offered, and getting excellent grades in them, but very poor grades in all the other subjects they required me to take.

I built three houses on my own, for myself, and sold each one before commencing the next; visiting Jamaica between projects in the winter.

I was not in Methuen when the Washington Monument was sold and removed, and I don't remember where I was at the time. The park, surrounding the monument, was not open to the public, as the gate was kept locked.

To make a dollar I have begun again to write feature stories on great houses here in Jamaica. Since I revived my old habit ten have been printed, and I am sending one as a sample.

I now feel I committed high sacrilege in demolishing the Nevins mansion in Methuen. The company for which I worked also tore down the Sutton mansion in Andover; retaining some of the paneling for my little house on Medford Street.

July 14, 1980

Ray Braun, who took that photo of the towers where the organ factory stood next to the Spicket River, was a friend. When I was a teenager, and he was married to a neighbor's daughter, he big-heartedly gave me his photo enlarger, because he had got a new one, and showed me how to use it. I used his photo because I liked it. That was many years after the gift of the enlarger, and I wanted to have something by him for my book. Well, at least the Nevins abridged version, as he had always been first-class to me!

Ray Fremmer

July 14, 1980 - continued

I sold my 35,000-word Searles biography for so little because I thought so little of it. I was, at that time, flat broke; a rebel dismissed from university for taking every writing course in the catalog instead of working toward a degree, and miserable in every brainless mill job I took in Lawrence after Tufts.

I found all those people I interviewed on Searles easily enough; one led to another. This one gave me that one's name. I phoned first, usually, and asked for an interview. Dr. Morrison's widow was a personal interview at her home.

August 29, 1980

I am happy to thank you for correcting my long-standing mistake, after so many years of being blissfully unaware of making it. I mean my confusing Collis Huntington with his nephew, Henry Huntington; at whose museum, in California, I saw the portrait painting of "Pinkie" displayed in the same gallery as "The Blue Boy". That was three years ago while on trips to Europe, New York, and to the west coast. Pray tell me where I made that error? It must have been in that stupid paper I gave to the Nevins Library on Searles. Suppose I go down in history on the merits of that piece of trash! Heaven forbid?

With twenty-one stories to my credit so far, in this series of features on Jamaican houses that started in February, I admit to being elated with all the compliments the local people pay me when they see me in Falmouth. And the half-dozen letters I have received from people who like my stories so much they feel that they must write and tell me about it.

November 8, 1980

I was delighted to get the "Pinkie" postcard, that you sent, as it satisfies a long-standing frustration. Two or three years ago, in a Greenwich Village, New York, art shop, I saw on a rack, those identical postcards, and I didn't even buy one! The next year, when I went back looking for the shop to buy one of the cards, I couldn't even find the shop, no matter how hard I tried!

The Red Tavern postcard, that you've also sent, I've never seen before. I've always loved the Red Tavern; Searles could certainly express himself in architecture. I was in love with Searles' buildings, jealous of them, craved to own just one tiny one of them; to be wealthy enough to own one of them. I was over-awed by the grandeur of wealth! Since that time I've wished that I was a nobleman living in a big European castle that had been in the family for hundreds of years!

Ray Fremmer

December 24, 1980

Your adventure in exploring the Red Tavern reminds me of my own at Pine Lodge, at age fourteen. I never was inside the Red Tavern in my life, so I thank you for the copies of your color photos taken of the interior. I love that chandelier that hangs over the staircase! Just this past week I have been working on the reconstruction of my own eighteenth century chandelier; bronze, with five hundred glass prisms.

January 28, 1981

Chance encounters have blessed me, to meet Douglas Dillon, Secretary of the Treasury, Johnny Cash, millionaire recording star, and his wife June Carter; Billy Graham visited me here, as well as Waylon Jennings, Marlon Brando, Steve McQueen, Ali MacGraw, Dustin Hoffman, Count and Countess Wedell, of Denmark. Millionaires, artists, famous people like actor Peter Finch, and others, have come here to see me because someone or other told them about me. They color my life; make it interesting!

April 21, 1981

I can't explain why I had no chance to get inside the Red Tavern when I was doing my research, and I don't even remember if it was operating as a restaurant at that time or not, but I have a feeling that it was closed up back then.

Tom Dorsey told me that the contractor taking down the Washington Monument kept the box, that contained the Searles relics, for himself.

Ben Rowland was the all-American figure image to the guys back at the wool brokers' office in Boston. While it is true that Rowland met me for lunch in Boston, when I was still in university and doing my research, I sensed that he wasn't at all impressed with me. As we parted, after lunch, he gave me an appointed day and time to show me through Pine Lodge. However, when I arrived at his door a little son answered, and called behind him, "Mother!" Finally Ben appeared, and said that he had an unexpected appointment and couldn't make it; couldn't show me through the place after all. I'm not sure, but he may also have returned to me, at his door, my unabridged version of my Searles manuscript which I had lent him at lunch in Boston, with the comment that we have to be kind to our dead friends; meaning Searles! He just decided to bow out of the scene, leaving me bewildered and disappointed!

Ray Fremmer

July 11, 1981

After Tufts University dismissed me I was sort of a misfit for years. I didn't have the money for a car, and couldn't drive anyhow; and so rode everywhere on an English Raleigh bicycle, much to the dismay of my mother who said I was in my second childhood, at the age of twenty-three, in 1949. I visited her less, and spent most of my time at the small house out in the country, which I built when I was twenty-one, in 1947. Anyhow, not working, and riding a bicycle, and frequenting the river swimming hole daily, as a rebound back to nature from the dry academic life of the university, I fell in, incongruously, with others who, like me, were not working, riding bicycles, and frequenting the swimming hole; boys around sixteen years old. Well, I suppose that it looked bad, but as a rebel I didn't care; for what others said, or thought. I was doing what I wanted to do, and that was all that mattered.

December 31, 1982

About that swimming hole I mentioned; it was on the Spicket River. You walk the railroad tracks through the heart of Methuen in the northerly direction until, at the edge of the town, the tracks cross over the river on a railway bridge. Just over the bridge, at the left side of the tracks, there is a wonderful path along the side of the river leading, after about five hundred feet, to what are known as "the little eddies", where, up until fifteen years ago, males of all ages, and a few adventurous females, would go swimming nude.

No, during that swimming hole period I wasn't working. You have to remember that I was always an iconoclast; a breaker of idols. I refused to join my parents, and the multitude of robots, suffering out their lives in quiet desperation in the Lawrence textile mills. How did I live without working? I existed on my meager veteran's allowance by riding a bicycle, not a car. By not drinking, or smoking; by eating very little, and by building my own small house on a forty-five by eighty foot piece of land that I paid forty-five dollars for.

But that swimming hole period in my life ended about 1955 when I learned to drive, sold that house, enlarged by that time, and finally went to Jamaica in 1957. There is hardly a day I don't miss that old swimming hole where we swam naked, and didn't have a care in the world, all summer long, summer after summer for about seven years; 1948 to 1955 !

APPENDIX

Flaming Towers Story Research

Page 9 - May 10, 1980

Reference: Ruth L. Barnard paper, June, 1955 - Nesmith Library
Windham, New Hampshire.

Page 1 - Paragraph 8

The original Stanton Harcourt castle receives its name from the English Stanton family, and the French Harcourt family. The two families inter-married, thus the name Stanton Harcourt. After the Reformation, however, the Stantons turned Protestant, while the Harcourts remained Catholic. The Stantons turned on the Harcourts and burned all their castles, and they also abolished the Harcourts' insignia from the shield, or coat-of-arms. The burning castle and the coat-of-arms, with one side a complete blank, are frequently seen carved on the walls and fireplaces of the castle.

Page 9 - July 14, 1980

Reference: Research at Boston Public Library on July 3, 1980.
Harcourt Genealogy, by Josiah C. Wedgewood - 1914.

Page 198 - Jane, widow of Sir Thomas Harcourt, re-married before 1424, Sir Robert Stelley of Oxon, Notts. Him too, she survived, and, known then as Dame Jane Harcourt of Bosworth, it was she who in 1450 is cited as procuring the attack on the Staffords of Grafton. Murders, which like some Kentucky fued, slew off the Staffords and Harcourts between 1448 and 1471.

Page 201 - This is the account, taken from contemporary documents, of the fueds of the Harcourts and the Staffords of Grafton and Chebsey; but why it started no man knows - in 1448 Plea Rolls.

- "The servants of Sir Robert Harcourt of Stanton and Bosworth, knight, designing the death of Sir Humphrey Stafford and of Richard Stafford, his eldest son, on Wednesday before Corpus Christi, 26 Hen. VI, in the High Street of Coventry, at the time of the fair, had collected other malefactors - sixty in number, armed, with salades, jakkes, swordes and billes by the procurement of Lady Jane Harcourt of Bosworth, widow - and had insulted, beaten and wounded Sir Humphrey and murdered Richard Stafford and William Sharpe his servant, - and with salades and defensibile long swordes and short pole axes, glayves and daggers had beaten and wounded Sir Humphrey Stafford and Richard Beauchamp arm, and nine servants of Humphrey,

and had left Humphrey insensible and nearly dead so that his life was despaired of."

For this, which is only told from the Stafford side, Sir Robert was outlawed. But with the Yorkists back in power in 1451, and Sir Robert in Parliament, the outlawry was annulled, so he formally surrendered at the Marshalsea in February, 1451, saying that he had been in Chester prison when the outlawry had been promulgated. Among those who stood surety for him were: Walter Blaunt of London, arm., Richard Harcourt of North Leigh, Oxon, arm., William Vernon of Harlaston, arm., and John Harcourt of Ellenhall, arm., In the Stafford history is an even fuller account of the killing of the Staffords by Sir Robert and John Harcourt of Eccleshall (sic.), arm.; that Robert, with a two-handed sword, had "struck Richard Stafford on the head, causing a mortal wound." etc.

The Rege. Roll of 32 Hen. VI, continues the fight -

Sir Humphrey Stafford of Grafton, Richard Beauchamp of Grafton, and four hundred others, on May 1st, 1450, assembled at Felde in Wychwode, and went thence by night to Stanton Harcourt, and had attacked at break of day Robert Harcourt and his servants whilst they were at their devotions, and had driven them into the church tower of Stanton Harcourt. They besieged them for six hours, burnt part of the church, even the crucifix, and completed their crimes by carrying off seven horses and all the Harcourts' household goods, which are curiously and laboriously set out in full. And by one of the "one thousand arrows" William Massey had been slain. As soon as the Lancastrians got back to power in October, 1470, the Staffords had it back on Sir Robert, and slew him. In 1471, Margaret, widow of Sir Robert Harcourt, appealed William Stafford of Grafton, Thomas and Humphrey Stafford of Grafton, arm., and about one hundred and fifty others, mostly from South Staffordshire, for the death of her husband. And thereafter, year after year, for four years, she appealed them, but received no justice; whence I deduce that the Staffords of Grafton and Chebsey reverted to the winning side.

Sir Robert had married before 1440, Margaret, daughter of Sir Jonh Byron of Clayton, Lancashire.

Excavations were begun at Morant Bay on June 2, 1965, by Ray Fremmer of Green Park, Trelawny, to locate the remains of the rebels of the 1865 Rebellion. Working on testimony, published in 1866, of a suspected rebel prisoner, John Grant, who was forced, along with 11 others, to dig the pits for the victims of the reprisal hangings, Mr. Fremmer found three separate pits on the second day of the search. In all, six different pits were eventually unearthed.

Here is Mr. Fremmer's account of his excavations.

"Nothing else on earth could possibly make us begin to feel today, a hundred years later, the reality of the horror of those mass hangings in 1865 as the sight of the seventy-nine exposed skeletons in the long row of adjoining pits discovered behind the Fort at Morant Bay. As we dug in the pits, exposing the remains, we could feel the horror in the stunned silence of the crowds that surrounded the pits every day. Even the usually boisterous element of Jamaican society turned numb and mute at the sight. Well over two thousand people visited the scene during the three weeks of digging.



"Calculations as to the burial spot were fortunately accurate; the first pit discovered later proved to be the first pit that was dug. They dug the pits behind the wall of the Fort in an old refuse dump for three reasons: the spot was hidden from the view of the usual occupants of the Court, it was close to the hanging site, and the men in charge thought it fitting that the rebels be buried in a refuse dump. Fortunately for the twelve men forced to dig the pits for their comrades, the digging for the first three pits in the refuse dump was much easier than the digging for the other three pits in the adjoining area of hard clay. Under the watchful eyes of the soldiers guarding them, the twelve men apparently dug until they were told to stop, which happened to be at a depth of about three feet. The broken bottles, chinaware, and iron of the old dump extended only two to eight inches deeper. This we know from the distance between the skeletal bones and the undisturbed hard clay a few inches beneath them. The first pit contained sixteen skeletons, laid neatly, head to toe, all facing east, eight skulls at either end of the

pit. This is in marked contrast to the other five pits, where the bodies were laid facing in any direction, east, west, straight up, even face down. The pits were more shallow, and smaller in size. It is as though the prisoner-diggers were weakening under the pace of the digging day after day. Possibly, the sight of so many of their lifeless comrades broke their spirit and sapped their strength.

"The next three pits, after the first one, were six inches less in depth, and the last two pits, entirely in the original clay, were a scant two feet deep. Pits three, four and six all had skeletons lying on top of one another. This, accompanied by the fact that clay holds water and becomes the heaviest of all types of soil, accounted for why the majority of skulls were crushed out of shape. It is reasonable to assume that the cause of the last pit being only two-thirds the size of the first pit and only two feet deep instead of three is that the men digging were exhausted and that the soldiers standing above them, impatiently, were forcing the pace. Hardly a by-stander

making comment failed to use the phrase 'packed like sardines' with reference to this last pit.

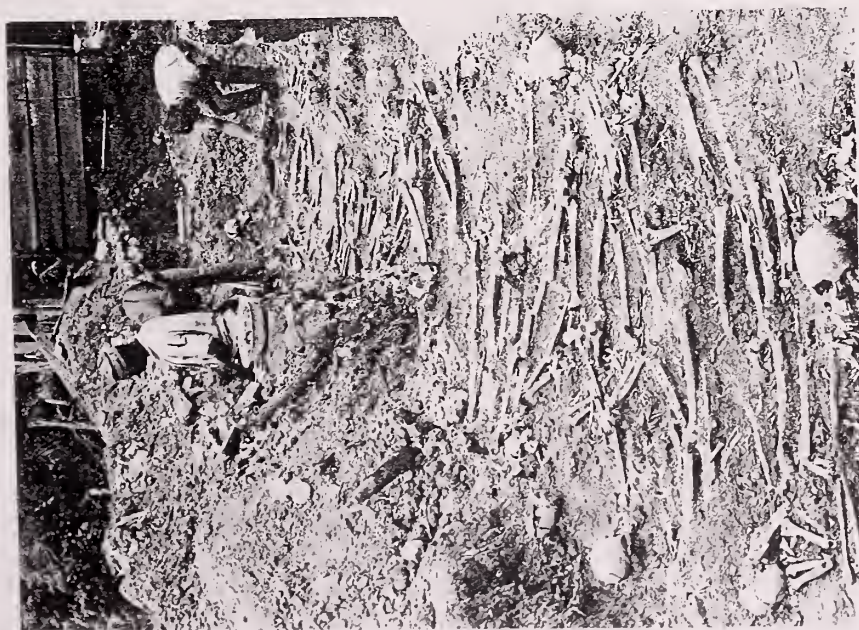
"While the official records give the figure of 179 men and 7 women being executed at Morant Bay, only 79 skeletons were found behind the Fort. This is explained by the fact that after Gordon and Bogle were hung as the ringleaders of the Rebellion at the Court House the hanging site and the burial site were changed to the Cotton tree nearer to the jail. It is conclusive from the number of skeletons found that after Bogle and thirteen others were hung on October 24th and buried behind the Fort there were no further burials there. It seems as though they were determined to hang him from the same building that he destroyed before changing to a more suitable area.

"No skeleton had any identifying marks. Aside from knowing that Bogle was in the pit that had fourteen skeletons because fourteen were hung that day no one could say which was him. If buttons are any criterion, all seemed to be wearing the same grade of clothing. Buttons found from the

neck down, that is, shirt buttons, were all of milk glass about a quarter inch in diameter; a very few had small, red decorative dots on them. Pant buttons were all of brass, about a half inch in diameter, and in very poor condition due to corrosion. Two chalk pipes were found, both with broken stems. Anything else that was found came from the fill of the refuse dump and was not on the bodies that were buried. The fact that not one coin was found, even though a metal detector was in constant use, indicates that the victims' pockets were emptied before they were buried.

"The skeletons represented an average cross-section of physical structure; some were tall; some short; some had huge heads; some very small. The one thing all had in common was amazingly sound teeth. Because there was a rumour that Bogle had gold teeth, every tooth in every skull was closely scrutinized and there not only was no gold but no cavities whatever. Evidently the diet of poor peasants makes for good teeth. Besides there being no cavities, there were very few skulls with any teeth missing. This would seem to indicate that there

were no old people amongst those hung at the front of the Court House. Of the seventy-nine skeletons only one had a deformity; one of those in the pit that held fourteen evidently was suffering from Paget's disease. Instead of there being two bones, as is normal, in each of the lower legs, the tibiae alone evolved and were twice the normal size."



HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY 1973

Annual Publication of

THE SOCIETY FOR HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Volume VII

1973

DAVID A. ARMOUR, Editor

Published by

THE SOCIETY FOR HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Mackinac Island State Park Commission
Stevens T. Mason Building
Lansing, Michigan

Printed by: TRIKRAFT, Incorporated, Lansing, Michigan

© 1973—The Society for Historical Archaeology

The Society for Historical Archaeology

The Society for Historical Archaeology is a non-profit, scientific-educational organization which aims to promote scholarly research in, and the dissemination of knowledge concerning historical archaeology; to exchange information in this field; to hold periodic conferences to discuss problems of mutual interest relating to the study of historical archaeology; and to obtain the cooperation of the concerned disciplines for projects of research. The focus of interest is the era since the beginning of explorations of the non-European parts of the world by Europeans, with prime concern in the Western Hemisphere. The Society also concerns itself with European, Oceanic, African, and Asian archaeology having a definite bearing upon scholarly problems in the Western Hemisphere.

The Society invites the participation and support of all who share its interest in history as it emerges from archaeological research and the study of written records. Membership is open to both professionals and interested laymen.



Dishes in Colonial Graves: Evidence from Jamaica

RAY FREMMER

The occasional discovery of ceramic dishes in Christian English graves of the post-medieval period has long been a source of debate; indeed, one such find gave rise to an exchange of correspondence in the columns of *The Gentleman's Magazine* as far back as 1785. Until 1967, however, there seem to have been no recorded instances of comparable finds outside the British Isles. In that year one such discovery was made in Jamaica and was followed in 1972 by another. These two instances, and the inferences to be drawn from them, provide the substance of the brief paper that follows.

The first example was found not in an ordinary grave but in a substantially built and only partially subterranean mausoleum owned by the Ricketts family of Westmoreland in southwestern Jamaica. Three inscribed grave slabs provided the floor of the mausoleum, establishing the first occupants as Jacob, son of George Ricketts, who died in England in 1755 at the age of 27, Hannah, his wife, who died in 1749 aged 28, and Mary the wife of George who died in 1755 at the age of 54. Constructed in about 1749, the tomb received eleven members of the family before the survivors sold the plantation and returned to England. Periodically they returned to Jamaica and maintained an active interest in the property; as long as they did so the new owners kept the mausoleum in good repair. Subsequent changes in ownership,

however, along with the fluctuating economic fortunes of Jamaican sugar planters, allowed the tomb to become neglected, and at some date in the early 1960s it was broken into by vandals who stole the lead coffins, hacking them into portable pieces and leaving behind only the bones, the remains of the outer wooden shells, and a few overlooked scraps of lead. The burial chamber had been entered through an eighteen-inch hole in the wall and it was through this that the robbers had handed out the salvaged lead. Along with coffin nails, handles, and three copper name plates, the 1967 investigation yielded the fragments of a plain, English, white saltglazed stoneware saucer dating from the second or third quarter of the eighteenth century (Figure 1, left).

The presence of the saucer did not immediately attract much attention. As it was not actually found within one of the coffins, it could be argued that it had been left behind by one of the burial parties, a stand, perhaps for a long-since decayed candle. The evidence of the second discovery was unequivocal, however. The slender remains of a wooden coffin were discovered in a rock-hewn grave on a sugar plantation at Trelawny, Jamaica, in 1972, the burial revealed through the natural erosion of the overlying topsoil. Resting against the left femur of a well-preserved male skeleton was a broken feather-edged creamware plate of about

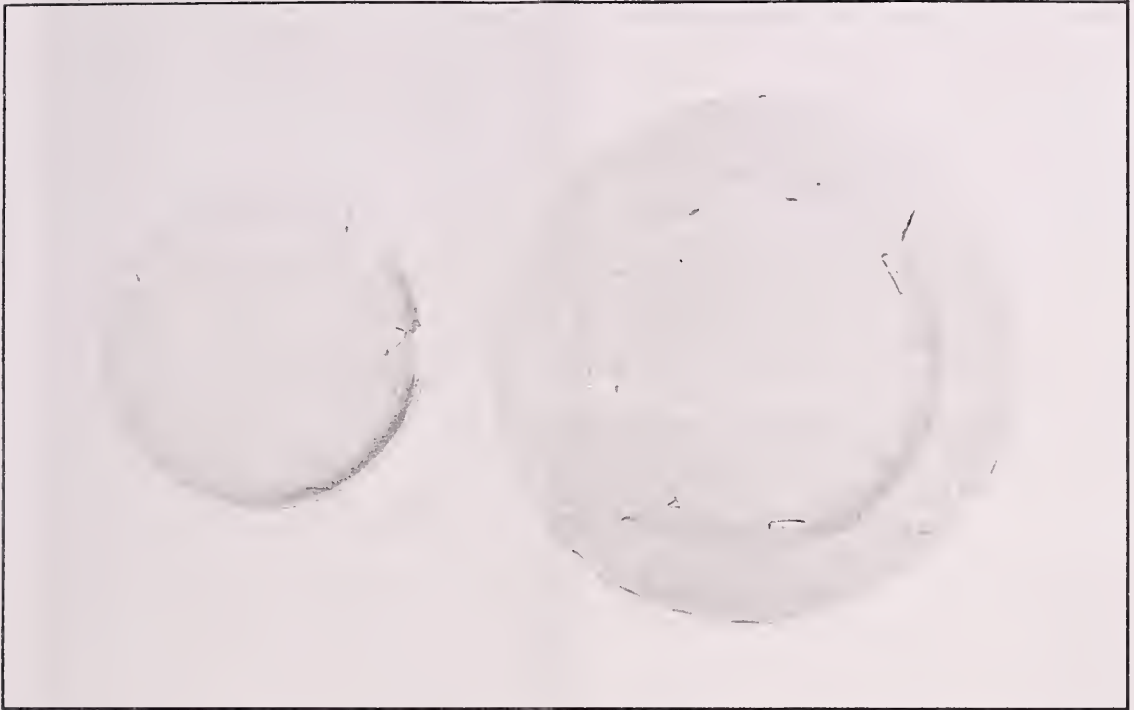


FIGURE 1. *Left: An English white saltglazed stoneware saucer found in a tomb in Westmoreland, Jamaica, in 1967. Diameter 4 3/4". Right: A feather-edged creamware plate found in a grave in Trelawny, Jamaica in 1972. Diameter 8".*

1770-1780 (Figure 1, right). The weight of the overburden had apparently been responsible for shattering the plate, for the coffin appeared to have bulged inwards as the wood decayed (Figure 2). Coffin nails and handles were recovered along with the remains of what seemed to have been thin brass coffin ornamentation, and white glass buttons of various sizes were found resting by the skeleton's ribs. The buttons undoubtedly came from a shirt, just as other larger buttons of bone found at the waist came with equal certainty from trousers. Nevertheless, the curious way in which the phalanges, metatarsals, and lower tarsals pointed

downwards (i.e. towards the foot of the coffin), suggested that the corpse had also been tightly wrapped, being interred in both clothing and shroud. The creamware plate lay below the pelvis and is thought to have rested on edge within the coffin, but if the plate's purpose is correctly interpreted it is likely that it slipped from the abdomen into that position after the lid was closed.

In 1956, the then archaeologist for the Corporation of London, Ivor Noël Hume, encountered an apparent parallel in excavations in the churchyard of St. Martin, Vintry, a London parish church burned in the Great Fire of 1666, but whose burial ground con-



FIGURE 2. Skeleton excavated in May of 1972 in Trelawny, Jamaica, showing, in situ, a feather-edged creamware plate of ca. 1770-80

tinued in use into the eighteenth century. Found within the area encompassed by the tower of the medieval church were five wooden coffins one of which contained an intact delftware plate inverted over the pelvis of the skeleton and held there by its hands. When removed, scraps of hair were

found adhering to the plate, indicating that it had lain directly against the corpse and had not been separated from it by the shroud. The plate, now in the collection of the Museum of London, was decorated in pseudo-Ming style in underglaze blue and was manufactured between about 1675 and 1685. (Noël Hume 1974: Figure 77). No explanation for its presence in the coffin was immediately forthcoming. Mr. Noël Hume noted at the time that although his museum duties had caused him to examine the contents of hundreds of coffins exposed as a result of wartime bombing, the St. Martin, Vintry, burial alone contained an object not associated with the deceased's person or apparel. In short, therefore, his experience indicated that such enriched interments were at least unusual.

The previously mentioned exchange of correspondence in *The Gentleman's Magazine* (1784-85) related to the discovery of a pewter plate contained in a burial of unspecified date in the graveyard of St. Mary's Church, at Leicester. After describing the condition of the plate, the writer, W. Bickerstaffe of Leicester, in his letter of March 16, 1784 added that it was "conjectured to have been laid, charged with salt, on the body of a deceased, and forgotten to be withdrawn" (*The Gentleman's Magazine*, April 1784: 258). More than a year elapsed before he received any response from fellow readers, and when it came, it inexplicably lurked behind the pseudonym "Q.Q.Q." who observed that the plate which Bickerstaffe "imagined" to have been "charged with salt, and laid on a corpse" was, in fact, a patten inserted "in the coffin of some priest or incumbent of that church" (*The Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1785: 328). Q.Q.Q. went on to inquire as to the origins and purpose of the salting practice, and it was Bickerstaffe in a letter dated July 10, 1785 who provided an answer, one at the same time both tart and leadenly pedagogic:

"Your instructive correspondent Q.Q.Q. . . having met with no answer to his inquiry about a plate of salt laid on the deceased; I

will venture to inform your correspondent (after I have bid him recollect that the place of interment was in church) that it was a custom in Leicester and its shire, yet continued, to place a dish or plate of salt on a corpse, to prevent its swelling and purging, as the term is. To account for the partial corrosion of the pewter, that it prevailed chiefly on the margin of the plate, and so slightly its calix, we may suppose it was protected by its saline contents from the action of the morbid matter; for the effluvia of salt may pervade or overflow its container or charger, as readily as magnetic virtue; and the lips of the plate possessing little or no preventive salt, the sanies was at liberty, *there*, to effect the greater impression" (*The Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1785: 603).

In October, 1785, another anonymous scholar threw in his twopence worth, informing Bickerstaffe that his explanation was wrong and that as Q.Q.Q. had stated, the plate was "a patten placed on the breast of the deceased, to show he had been a priest." The writer signed *C*C added that the recognized practice of placing salt on plates atop corpses to prevent air entering the bowels and causing the stomach to expand, did not include interring the salt, much less the pewter dish, along with the deceased. (*The Gentleman's Magazine*, October 1785:760). Bickerstaffe seems to have let it go at that, not bothering to note that he had said from the start that he thought the presence of the plate was accidental.

Bickerstaffe's reasoning was endorsed in part by other sources brought together by that indefatigable antiquary and proto-sociologist John Brand in his *Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain*. Brand's manuscript was compiled prior to 1795, but it was not published until 1813 at which date it was issued in a version edited and augmented by Sir Henry Ellis. In the section devoted to British mourning and burial practices, he observed that "It is customary at this day [c.1790], in some parts of Northumberland, to set a pewter plate containing a little salt upon the corpse" (Brand 1849: 234). It had been suggested, he said,

that the practice was intended to protect the deceased from the attentions of Satan for "the devil loveth no salt in his meat, for that is a sign of eternity, and used by God's commandment in all sacrifices." Thomas Penant in his *Tours in Scotland* (1771-75) had reported that on the death of a Highlander, "the corpse being stretched on a hoard, and covered with a coarse linen wrapper, the friends lay on the breast of the deceased a wooden platter, containing a small quantity of salt and earth, separate and unmixed: the earth an emblem of the corruptible body, the salt an emblem of the immortal spirit" (Brand 1849: 235). A similar practice was recorded from the Isle of Man where the corpse was laid on a "straightening-board" and a "trencher with salt in it, and a lighted candle, are placed on the breast, and the bed, on which the straightening-board bearing the corpse rests is generally strewn with strong-scented flowers" (Brand 1849:235). The placing of a dish of salt over the heart was also noted in Ireland in 1777, where the same reason as given. It was not, however, the explanation given in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, and Brand, borrowing from it, observed in a footnote that "the custom of putting a plate of salt upon corpses is still retained in many parts of England, and particularly in Leicestershire . . . The pewter plate and salt are laid on the corpse with an intent to hinder air from getting into the bowels, and swelling up the belly, so as to occasion either a bursting, or, at least, a difficulty in closing the coffin" (Brand 1849: 234-35).

Extensive inquiries amongst Jamaicans have revealed that in isolated parts of the island where traditional customs survive, a dish containing a mixture of freshly ground coffee and salt is laid on the stomach of the corpse and remains there throughout the wake and burial. This last is important for none of the quoted eighteenth-century British sources state that the salt-laden dishes were left in the coffin, and as previously noted, *The Gentleman's Magazine* correspondents were firm in their contentions to the contrary. The Jamaican introduction of the coffee would appear to be a varia-

tion on the already cited British practice of strewing the vicinity of the corpse with strong-scented flowers. Although it is possible to construct a relationship between such funerary practices and comparable African rituals, there is no reason to assume that either of the eighteenth-century Jamaican burials under discussion were anything but British in origin. The question, however, is whether the presence of ceramic saucers, plates, or other dish-like vessels found in British or colonial graves can really be associated with the salt-technique and, if so, whether such discoveries can be of value in suggesting regional origins.

REFERENCES

ANONYMOUS

1784-1785 *The Gentleman's Magazine*.
London

BRAND, JOHN

1849 *Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain: Chiefly Illustrating the Origin of Our Vulgar and Provincial Customs, Ceremonies, and Superstitions, Vol. II*. Bohn's Antiquarian Library, London.

NOËL HUME, IVOR

1974 *All The Best Rubbish*. Harper and Row, New York.

